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MEETING OF RWANDA OPERATIONAL SUPPORT GROUP

Burundi: Reinforcing Peace and Stability

RELEASED IN FULL

I. BACKGROUND

Political. With the presidential succession crisis resolved, the ruling Hutu-dominated FRODEBU party and the Tutsi-dominated opposition are now negotiating over the leadership of the National Assembly. FRODEBU thought they had the opposition's agreement to elect former FRODEBU Health Minister Jean Minani as the Assembly's new President; however, the opposition is now complaining that Minani is too hardline. The division of posts within the new government will undoubtedly be a source of continued tensions. National debates are planned in 1995 to discuss the basic problems (ethnic tension, insecurity, military reform) that were not addressed in the powersharing talks. With the succession issue settled, SRSG Abdallah has indicated he would like to move on to another assignment.

Security. The Tutsi-dominated Burundi military has carried out a program to disarm (Hutu) civilian groups. While the campaign was ordered by the Hutu-led government, the military has failed to show restraint, leading to numerous civilian deaths. Exiled former hardline FRODEBU Interior Minister Leonard Nyangoma has rejected the Hutu moderates' accommodation with the Tutsi military/opposition and has threatened to do battle against the Burundi government/military. His supporters

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- 2 -

may have already made incursions into northern Burundi from Zaire, linking up with armed hardline Hutu groups that have been clashing off and on with the Tutsi military. Rwandan Hutu refugees have also clashed with the Burundi military in the north, and possibly with RPA soldiers crossing into Burundi.

Refugees. There are over 200,000 new Rwandan Hutu refugees in Burundi, while tens of thousands of old Tutsi refugees have returned to Rwanda since the RPF's military victory. Some Rwandan refugees and Burundi Hutus have been fleeing into Tanzania, apparently as a result of Burundi military harassment. There are over 300,000 new and old Burundi refugees living primarily in Tanzania and Zaire. Hundreds of thousands remain internally displaced following the October 1993 coup attempt and subsequent ethnic massacres that killed an estimated 50,000.

U.S. Aid. The U.S. has provided over \$60 million in relief aid to Burundi since October 1993. Assistance toward reconciliation includes: strong support for the SYG's very effective special representative, Ahmedou Abdallah; \$250,000 to help the OAU deploy military observers (40 of 47 deployed so far); \$300,000 for the UNHRC's human rights technical advisory services program; and \$5 million in FY-94 and FY-95 for development aid, including democracy/governance funding.

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II. TALKING POINTS

- All sides in Burundi must exercise moderation and accept the need for cohabitation. All Burundians must understand that any group that seeks to take power by force will find itself completely isolated.
- We have sent several high-level visitors to Burundi. We know others have done the same; we strongly encourage continuation of this practice.
- UN SRSG Abdallah has done a very good job, but has indicated he may be planning to move on now that the government is in place.
 - The UN needs someone of Abdallah's skill and experience in Burundi.
 - We are also looking at proposals to send facilitators to complement the efforts of the UN and OAU.
- We have provided \$250,000 for the OAU monitors. We are encouraging the OAU to fully deploy and have its monitors play an active role in confidence building.
- Sporadic ethnic violence continues, and local hate radios are reportedly still broadcasting. Both groups still have real security concerns. The OAU monitors may help instill some confidence. Are there other initiatives possible? What can be done about the radios?
- We would like to see the regional refugee conference in Bujumbura and believe this may have a stabilizing effect.

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